STORIES OF TENALI RAMAN

The 'Stories of Tenali Raman' is an entertaining and thought provoking book that can be enjoyed by all age groups. These stories highlight the wisdom, humour and intelligence of Tenali Raman, the court jester of the King Krishnadevarayar. The ingenious ways of Tenali Raman in solving delicate and complicated problems will definitely fascinate the readers.

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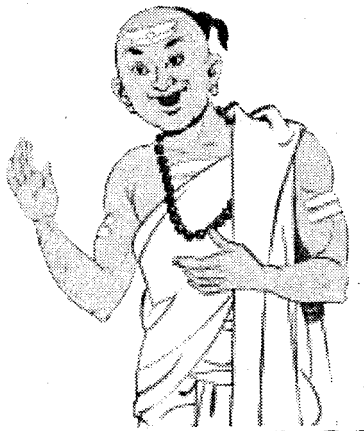

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Retold by: **George Immatty**
Translated by: **Sureshkumar**

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1. TENALI RAMAN, THE GREAT COURT JESTER

This is the story of Tenali Raman, the famous court jester of the renowned Vijayanagaram Empire of Krishna Devarayar. The empire was famous for its glory and wealth and it was in the State of Andhra Pradesh of modern India. The Vijayanagaram Kingdom was established in 1336 AD . The period of Krishna Devarayar is considered as the Golden Era of the Vijayanagaram Empire.

Raman was born in Garlappad village in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh. His father Ramayya died when Raman was very young. Later, his mother took him to Tenali. Thus he became Tenali Raman. After completing school education, Raman returned to his village. Raman was a very intelligent boy but he was very naughty. He was not willing to do any work and was in the grip of starvation. Even in the midst of poverty and hunger, he used to ridicule his neighbours and friends. There are many incidents to prove his wisdom and intelligence.

Once Tenali, the green village was under severe drought. All the ponds and wells were dry. All the vegetation vanished. Famine spread throughout the village. The cry of hunger and thirst echoed everywhere. Drinking water became scarce and some of the villagers fled for other villages.

During this time a monk reached the village. The moment he set foot on the soil of the village, it began to rain. People thought that it was the arrival of the monk that caused the shower. Everyone except Raman hailed the monk and touched his feet as a sign of reverence.

Raman was hesitant to accept this logic. His rational mind believed that it was not the arrival of the monk that caused the rain. It would have rained, even if the monk had not arrived. This was his attitude and he told this truth to others. The villagers advised him not to provoke the monk. But Raman wished to tell the truth to the monk. He came near him and told, 'Hello, Swami, have you seen a palm tree ? Once, a tired crow wanted to perch on a tree. It saw a palm tree and perched on it . At that moment, a nut fell down from the tree. Some people, who saw this simultaneous incidents commented, 'it was the crow that caused the nut to fall down.' But I think it is nothing but a superstition. Is it not a superstition, Swami?' Raman asked the monk. The ripe nut would have fallen, even if the crow did not perch on the tree.

But the villagers were reluctant to accept Raman's arguments. When the people dispersed, the monk called Raman and told, 'You are very intelligent. I will teach you a number of mantras. You should recite it daily in praise of Kali. The goddess will bless you and she would make you famous throughout this land. The coming generations will remember you for your wit and glory.

2. GODDESS KALI BLESSES RAMAN

Raman learned the Kali mantras taught by the monk. He grasped it soon. He went to the Kali temple in the night and began to chant it. It was midnight and an uneasy calm prevailed in that area. Only Raman's mantras burst the silence. Suddenly a frightening figure appeared on the scene amidst thunderous noise. It was really the Goddess Kali. The Kali Devi had thousand faces and all the thousand mouths were opened, the long teeth stretched outside the mouth. Fire emanated from all the thousand eyes. It was altogether a terrible figure.

But Raman remained unmoved. He did not feel anything extraordinary. He simply smiled. ''Why are you laughing?'' Devi asked Raman. "A mysterious doubt provoked me into laughter. I have only one head and a nose. Yet during cold, I find it difficult to wipe out the discharge from the nose with my hands. You have got thousand heads and the same number of noses, but have only two hands. It will be difficult for you to wipe out the discharge from all the noses with just two hands. Please forgive me for saying this," Raman answered. The reply made Devi to start laughing. She liked Raman's mischief.

Later the Goddess showed two gold pots to Raman and said, "One pot contains milk of wealth, the other one milk of wisdom. You can choose any one of them,

but only one." Raman was hesitant. "Oh! Devi, old people say wealth is sour. What does it mean?" He doubted. "The ways chosen by people to become rich are not good," Devi said. "If you drink the milk of wealth, you

will become rich. On the other hand, the milk of wisdom makes you wise and intelligent", Goddess narrated its qualities. Raman used a trick. "How can I choose one, without tasting both?" By saying this, Raman drank and emptied the two pots of milk within seconds.

"Oh! Goddess, please pardon me. I want to be both rich and wise. One's life becomes meaningful only if he achieves these two things", Raman justified his action. "You are clever", said the Goddess."But who told you to drink both pots of milk ? As a punishment, I curse you to become a jester", Devi proclaimed. Raman begged the Goddess not to curse him, "Oh! Goddess, I want to become a good poet as well as a jester. There is also a mistake on your part. You held the two pots of milk in your hands simultaneously. That means, you too consider both the pots of milk as equal".

Kali Devi was in a fix. " One day you will become a good poet and a jester. But the coming generations will remember you as a jester only". After blessing Raman, the Goddess disappeared. Raman became excited and thanked Kali Devi.

3. PRIEST CHEATS RAMAN

After becoming a youth, Raman wished to please Krishnadevarayar, the emperor of Vijayanagaram. He wanted to be an inmate of the king's durbar. 'How can I achieve this?' he thought for a while.

During this period, Raman got married and had a son. Still he wished to become an inmate of the palace. Neither the family ties nor its burden bothered him.

At that time, the durbar priest of Vijayanagaram named Tathachary came to the Devi temple at Mangalagiri near Tenali. "How can I appease the priest ?" Raman thought. It is easy to become a member of the durbar if the priest helped, as the king revered the priest very much.

Raman approached Tathachary with this intention. But the priest was clever and cunning. 'If Raman becomes a jester at the durbar, my fame and reputation will end,' swamy thought. Moreover Raman had shown his poem titled "Lingapurana" to him.

The priest had other plans in his mind. 'I can have all the works done by Raman, as long as I stay here. My old age prevents me to do all the works by myself. Let him stay with me at Mangalagiri. He can be fooled by offering a job in the palace', Tathachary dreamed. Raman was ready to do any work for swamy to become an inmate of the king's durbar. So, he stayed with the priest and helped him in his day to day affairs. During his stay there, Raman had recited the poem 'Lingapurna' to the priest. The priest became jealous of Raman. What an excellent poem! It contains a great poet's wisdom and imagination. He congratulated Raman. 'You are too good to be an inmate of the palace. The king will definitely like you'. Tathachary praised Raman but with dubious intention. Raman continued to serve the priest with dedication.

At last the day came for the priest to return. Tathachary shed crocodile tears and said, "I am grateful to your sincere service. As soon as I reach there, I will send a man to invite you to the palace. You just accompany him. I will manage the rest". Raman sent the priest off, with tears in his eyes. He was relieved from tension. 'I am going to become an inmate of the palace soon,' he dreamt. But nobody came to him as promised by the priest. He felt desperate. His long wait for the job was in vain.

Raman left for Vijayanagaram along with his wife and child. His aim was to seek a job in the palace. The journey was very difficult. He reached the priest's house and informed the servant about his arrival. 'I am Raman from Tenali. I want to see your master.' The priest's usher went inside and told about Raman's arrival. But Tathachary's reply was not favourable. 'I don't know any Raman from Tenali. I don't want to see him'. When the usher informed this to Raman, he became furious. He rushed in to the priest's house and said, 'I am Raman from Tenali. It was I who served you at Mangalagiri. I came here to remind you of your promise'. Tathachary could not tolerate the action of Raman. The angry priest ordered his servant to beat and push Raman out of the house. Raman felt sad and dejected. 'He is a cheat. I will teach him a lesson,' Raman vowed to take revenge.

4. RAMAN EXCELS

Eminent scholars from different parts of the country have assembled at the king's durbar for the routine debate. Raman went directly to the durbar and sat among the audience. It was a discussion and debate on 'illusion'. A scholar from North India said, 'All we see

on earth are mere illusions. Our happiness, well-being, sadness are all illusions. It is only the thoughts which make us happy or sad'. Everybody assembled at the

durbar agreed with his arguments. 'What a philosopher he is!' they hailed the scholar.

The king looked around to see anybody to counter the scholar. But no one came forward. The king felt dejected. Suddenly he heard a voice and it was Raman challenging the scholar. "Dear friends, the scholar said here that it was thought which gives us happiness and sadness. At present it is noon and let the beloved king give us sumptuous meal. We can all eat the food. The scholar should not eat it. Let him think that he is eating. Will this thought satisfy his hunger?" Raman challenged. His arguments put the scholar in a fix. The king called Raman to his side and congratulated. He gave Raman prizes including gold coins.

5. RAMAN BECOMES JESTER

One day a magician from North India came to the durbar. He displayed various magical tricks which pleased the King Krishnadevarayar. The magician showed an unusual item during the show. It was the magic of separating his head from the body. 'Can anyone in Vijayanagaram do this magic?' he challenged the inmates of the durbar. But nobody dared do it. The king felt dejected.

Raman came forward. He bowed before the King and the audience and went to the magician. 'Can you do the

trick with open eyes, which I perform by closing my eyes?' Raman challenged the magician. The magician did not feel anything unusual in Raman's offer. 'I can do any trick with open eyes, which Raman does with closed eyes', the magician consoled himself and accepted the challenge. Raman brought a bag full of chilli powder. By closing his eyes, he sprinkled the powder on to it. He stood still for some time. After that he removed the entire powder and opened his eyes. Later Raman brought another bag full of chilli powder and handed it over to the magician. He asked the magician to do the trick with open eyes. The magician tried to escape from the scene. The people assembled there ridiculed him. The dejected wizard ended his programmes and returned home. The king became excited. It was Tenali Raman's wisdom and intelligence that paid. The king appointed Raman as his court jester. The public who assembled there congratulated Raman. The court priest Tathachary, who was also present there hailed Raman, but he was jealous.

6. TAKE VENGEANCE ON TATHACHARY

Tenali Raman thus became the court jester of Krishnadevarayar. He built a house for his family. He almost settled his family matters. He was seeking a chance to teach Tathachary a lesson. At last, Raman found a way to take vengeance on the priest.

Tathachary had a routine bath daily at 4 a.m. He bathed at Tungabhadra river, near the palace. He usually undressed his robes before bathing. The tantrik rules strictly prohibit naked bathing by a king's priest.

Tathachary who knew all the rules did not obey any of them. 'I will do as I like. Nobody is to question me', was his attitude.

One day, Raman followed Tathachary to the bathing ghat without the latter's knowledge. Tathachary in his usual way undressed his robes on the bank of the river. Raman went there quietly, took it and hid the dress at another place. After bathing, Tathachary, came in search of his dress, but could not find it.

He saw Raman there. Raman remained unmoved and stood unfamiliar to the court priest. His mind moved back. 'It was the same priest who discarded me when I approached him at Vijayanagaram, where as, I had nursed him at Mangalagiri', Raman thought. Tathachary knew, it was Raman who had taken away his dress. 'Hey Raman, kindly, give me the dress', the priest begged. Tathachary had to remain naked under the water all the time. Raman narrated the painful experience faced by him when he earlier approached Tathachary.

'Please forgive me and return my dress', Tathachari pleaded before Raman. 'Okay, I will give back the dress on one condition. You should carry me on your shoulders to the palace,' Raman put forward his condition. 'This is a mark of repentance for your sinful deeds', he added. Tathachary agreed the condition and Raman returned the dress to him. The priest began to walk along the crowded streets, carrying Raman on his shoulders. The people laughed at the priest.

7. TIT FOR TAT

The king was wandering on the portico of the palace. He saw a strange scene. The revered priest was carrying Raman on his shoulders, like a donkey. Raman was booing. The people assembled on either side of the road laughed at the unusual scene. The king was unable to tolerate this. "A respected priest like Tathachary cannot be treated like this". The king called two of his soldiers and ordered, "See a man carrying another on his shoulders, you bring down the man on top and beat him, and bring the other man here.'

Raman saw the king's gestures to the soldiers. He felt something wrong in it. He saw the soldiers coming from a distance. Suddenly Raman got down from Tathachary's shoulders and touched his feet as a mark of respect. You have carried me on your shoulders till now. Sorry, I will carry you similarly as a part of my regret', Raman said.

The foolish priest felt proud and agreed at once and climbed on Raman's shoulders. Raman started walking. The two soldiers who reached the scene brought down the priest, and beat him. Tathachary could not understand what was happening. The priest remembered the scene in which his servants beating Raman, when the latter visited his house.

8. KING ORDERS EXECUTION

The soldiers brought Raman before the king instead of Tathachary. The soldiers didn't know the trick played by Raman. The king couldn't tolerate the arrogance of Raman. "He is a devil. I had ordered to beat Raman and bring the priest", king said. It was the reverse that had happened.

The soldiers replied "We have done as per your order. When we reached the spot, we saw Raman carrying the priest on his shoulders, so we brought Raman here. We haven't done any harm to him." Raman was listening like a spectator.

The furious king said, "Raman has insulted a priest who is revered by whole citizens. This has, in effect, insulted me also. Take away this devil, and behead him. After that show the blood-stained sword to the army chief", the king could not control himself. Raman didn't utter a word. The soldiers took away Raman outside.

9. RAMAN ESCAPES

The death sentence pronounced on Raman was heard by two close aides of the King. The two had animosity with the priest. They had also witnessed the beating of Raman at Tathachary's residence earlier. Both had the intention of saving Raman from the capital punishment.

They followed Raman and prepared a plan. For this they brought a goat.

The two followed Raman to the jungle where the execution was to be performed. The goat was also with them. They arranged the soldiers to kill the goat and show the blood stained sword to the army chief. The soldiers who earlier refused to obey, later accepted it. They also asked Raman not to remain in the native land. Raman gave them 10 gold coins each and left the place. The soldiers returned to the palace and showed the blood stained sword to the army chief. Everybody thought that Raman was executed. Some of them felt sad. But Tathachary was happy for getting rid of his enemy.

10. FAMILY PENSION

Raman, who escaped from the death sentence went directly to his home. He asked his mother and wife to plead before the King. They reached the palace and began to lament before the king. 'Oh lord ! you had killed Raman. He was the only earning member of our house. I am a widow and who will look after me henceforth. How can I live ?' Raman's mother Lakshmamma cried before the King.

'Oh lord! How cruel you are! I have also become a widow now. How will I look after my son?, Raman's

wife Mangamma also cried before the king. After hearing the two, the king felt sad. His heart filled with compassion. He consoled the two ladies. The king ordered to give 100 gold sovereigns each to them. Krishnadevarayar also issued orders to grant 20 sovereigns as monthly pension to the family. Lakshmamma and Mangamma returned home and handed over the gold coins to Raman. Raman burst into laughter. 'The amount paid as bribe to soldiers to escape from the death sentence has now been regained'. The mother and wife also joined Raman in laughter.

11. SOUL OF A BRAHMIN

Killing Brahmin is a great sin. A great repentance is needed to compensate the sin. This was the belief that prevailed since long ago. Tenali Raman was a Brahmin. The king had killed Raman. This cruel act will have negative impact on the entire country. Such a divine voice was heard by the queens of the palace. They informed it to king Krishnadevarayar. He convened a meeting of the priests and decided to bury the soul of Raman.

During a moonless night, the head priest and 108 assistant priests set out from the palace to the nearby temple. It was midnight. They had planned to bury Raman's soul under a banyan tree adjacent to the temple. Raman knew this secret. He painted black oil on his

body and sat on the banyan tree. He looked like a ghost. The priests began to chant mantras under the tree to invoke the spirit. Soon Raman jumped on them, the priests were bewildered and cried. They thought it was a ghost. They ran for shelter and returned to the palace.

At dawn, they informed the king about the previous day's experience. The news spread throughout the entire empire. The fear of ghost weakened the mobility of the people. The king became worried. At last he found a solution.

He announced, "We had to exorcise the ghost. Anyone who do this will be rewarded with 1000 gold sovereigns."

The messengers announced the king's proclamation throughout the country. Raman who returned home also heard this news. He felt happy as his plans proved fruitful.

12. RAMAN REACHES PALACE AGAIN

The bad news of Brahmin's ghost spread all over the Vijayanagaram empire. Naturally people were in fear. Even two days after the proclamation, there was no response from the public. On the third day, the king was sitting gloomy in the durbar. Tathachary also sat beside the king. A soldier came before the king and announced the arrival of a sage. The king ordered to bring the sage in. The sage came . He wore a saffron dress. He had long hair and beard. The long matted hair extended up to his navel. He wore a beads roll around the neck. Altogether the king liked the sage. 'I am ready to evict the Brahmin's soul. Are you ready to reward with anything I demand?' the monk asked. 'I am ready. But don't ask things which would affect the reputation or well-being of the nation', the king clarified.

The sage agreed the condition. The king had other ideas in mind. ' Along the eviction of Brahmin's soul, is it possible to absolve from the sin of killing Tenali Raman?' the king asked the sanyasi. The monk replied,

"As a result of my obsequies, things will proceed as if the Brahmin was not killed at all.' 'In that case can you revive Tenali Raman'?, the king doubted.

'If Tenali Raman resurrect, he will become regular nuisance for you, so it is better to perform obsequies for the killing. Do not revive him', court priest Tathachary

told the king. It is well known that Raman was a threat to Tathachary. 'As per rule, how can the order of a king to kill the law-breaker become a sin ?' the monk said. 'Even if it is for maintaining law, act of Killing is a Killing and it is sinful. We must bury the soul of Raman', the court priest said. 'The harassment of the ghost is at the temple, which is seven furlong away from here. You have to go there. We will make all necessary arrangements for the pooja tomorrow', Tathachary added.

But the monk had other ideas. He said, 'All the rites can be done here itself now.' He saw fear gripping on the face of Tathachary.' Even if Tenali Raman is alive, it won't cause any harm, as he became a ghost due to unnatural death', the sage consoled Tathachary

'The sin of killing a Brahmin also has to be expiated', the king suggested.

'Oh ! lord,I am doing both the rites together. Don't worry', saying this the ascetic removed his beard and matted hair. The king became excited. Tathachary moved back with fear. 'I am the Brahmin, killed by you', he told loudly. It was really Tenali Raman. Thus Raman appeared alive at the court durbar. All of them believed that Raman was dead. The king asked Raman 'What do you want from me?' 'A thousand gold sovereigns and release from death sentence', Raman replied, at once. The king accepted the demands and acted accordingly.

13. ANOTHER DEATH SENTENCE

The fame and goodwill of Vijayanagaram empire made many people jealous. There were attempts to kill the King Krishnadevarayar. Once, a spy from Nalgonda came to Vijayanagaram. His mission was to assassinate Krishnadevarayar. The spy, somehow stayed at Tenali Raman's house. The king didn't know about it.

The spy, in the absence of Raman, sent a messenger to the king. It was an invitation to visit Raman's house. The king thought that it was Raman who had sent the messenger to him. There may be some serious matter otherwise, a jester won't invite the king to his house. As soon as the king entered Raman's house, the spy dashed forward with a dagger to kill him. The timely intervention of fellow people saved the king from danger.

The crime committed by Raman in providing shelter to a spy with the intention to kill the king, was severe During the trial, Raman admitted the crime. It was the monster Appaji who sentenced Raman with death penalty. People became upset over the verdict. They protested. Then the minister gave Raman a small favour. Raman was allowed to choose the mode of his death. Raman said 'I feel sorry for sentencing me death penalty. The crime was done without my knowledge or consent. Anyway I am thankful to the minister for allowing me to choose the mode of my death. As per the ministers order, I am declaring the mode of death. I prefer old age

death' ! The people were excited over the comment. They hailed Raman. Thus, he escaped from the death-trap once more.

14. FAKE MONK ASSASSINATED

There was a fake monk at Vijayanagaram who indulged in several crimes including murders. He was very clever and eloquent. He looked smart and well dressed. He also behaved politely. But in true life, he was cruel and wicked. His mode of operation was strange. If there was animosity between two people, he would favour the rich man among them and collect money from him. He will promise to destroy the enemy. Then he will reach the enemy's house and stay there pretending as a monk. When the time comes he will poison the host's food. The enemy will either die or become a mental patient. This was the queer mode of operation of the monk. He had cheated several people like this. But Tenali Raman identified the true colour of the 'sanyasi'.

One day, Raman met the monk on his way. At that time, a man cheated by the monk also came near them. The man had become a mental patient due to the misdeeds of the monk. Raman caught hold of the mental patient and introduced him to the monk. The fake 'sanyasi' looked seriously at the mental patient. He soon became a violent person and killed the monk. Raman was excited. 'A fake is dead', he consoled himself. The mental patient walked away after a 'successful mission'.

15. RAMAN ESCAPES ANOTHER ATTEMPT

The death of the monk had its consequence. The mental patient was arrested for killing the monk. He was acquitted on the grounds of mental insanity. But the trial of the case continued.

The trial proved that Tenali Raman was guilty. So Raman was ordered to be executed by the king. The mode of killing, ordered by the king was strange. Raman was to be brought to an isolated area and his body was to be covered with earth up to the neck. Later, he was to be trampled to death by an elephant.

The soldiers began to execute the king's order. Raman was brought to the spot where a pit was dug for the purpose and kept him in it with neck deep in mud. The soldiers then went to bring the elephant. At that time, a dhobi came that way. He was a hunch back. Raman noticed the hunch on the dhobi. He laughed at the dhobi. The washerman looked at Raman, who was covered up to his neck by mud.

'Why are you standing in the pit covered with earth?' The dhobi asked Raman. 'I am a hunch back. I am standing like this to remove the bent on my back', Raman told. 'If I too stand like this, will my hunch also vanish?' the dhobi asked. 'Definitely. If you have any doubt, remove the earth and look,' Raman said. The dhobi removed the earth covered on Raman. He didn't see any hunch on Raman. The dhobi was unaware of the

good health of Raman. He thought that Raman had a hunch on his back, before covering his body with mud. The dhobi had trust in the words of Raman. He stood in the pit and covered his body upto neck with earth. Raman returned home. In the meantime the elephant came and trampled the dhobi to death.

16. PENSION TO DHOBI'S WIFE

The king was very much dejected. He thought that Raman was dead. It was he who ordered to kill Raman for assassinating a monk. The king was distressed after knowing that the dead monk was a criminal. Although it was Raman who was responsible for the murder, the act saved several innocent people. The king began to cry and tears flowed from his eyes.

Raman, who knew about it appeared before the king. He narrated how he escaped from the death sentence. The king felt compassionate to the dhobi's family. He ordered to pay pension to dhobi's wife. She also got married to a man without hunch, after an year.

17. REBIRTH TO RAMAN

Raman once borrowed 100 gold coins from the King Krishnadevarayar. But he couldn't repay it even after long time. The King's manager sent a messenger to

Raman, demanding the money. But, Raman had no money with him. He had other loans to be paid.

'I have no money at present. It will be paid later', Raman told the messenger. After he left, Raman laid at the bed like a dead man. The body was covered with white clothes, from top to bottom. His mother and wife sat near the 'body' crying aloud. The neighbors who heard the cries assembled at Raman's house. They saw Raman lying dead. The king also reached there to pay homages. The king consoled Raman's mother and wife 'How did Raman die instantly?' he asked.

'My son had no disease at all. He had owed 100 gold sovereigns to the palace. A messenger had come here today, demanding the money. Instantly Raman laid in bed. He didn't wake up since then. He asked me to pay the money. This was the last wish uttered by my son', Raman's mother told the king.

The king called his manager immediately "Write off all debts owed by Raman. His mother should not feel sad regarding this", the king ordered.

As soon as the king declared the order, Raman woke up from the bed by removing the white clothes. The king was shocked. He moved a little backward. 'Oh lord! Don't be frightened. I was resurrected from death hearing your generosity,' Raman laughed and bowed before the king.

'You have resurrected when the debt amount was written off. Then how did you die?' the king queried. 'I died due to the burden of the debt. When you removed the burden, life returned to me', Raman burst into laughter. The king also laughed. He raised the salary of Raman. Consequently, Raman did not borrow any money as loan.

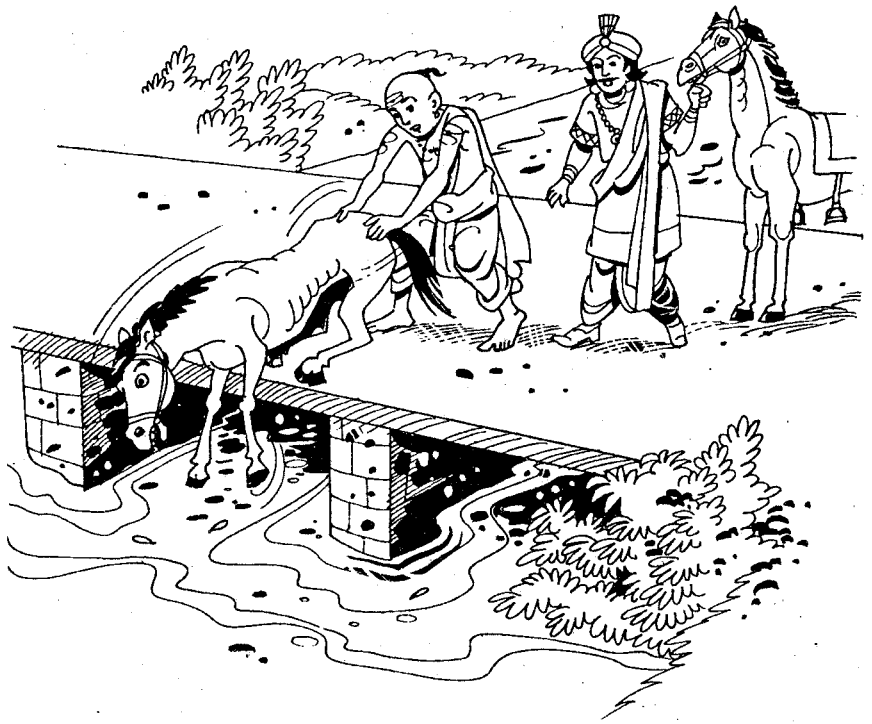
18. REWARD FOR INSULT

The King Krishnadevarayar bought a horse. It was a highly trained animal. The horse showed various actions which surprised the soldiers. People began to praise the horse.

One day, the king was doing exercises sitting on the horse. The venue was a bridge on top of the Thungabhadra river. Raman came near and looked at the exercises. He told the king, 'Your horse is good. But can you do all the exercises done by my horse, with your horse?'

'Yes, certainly. Bring your horse, let us see', the king replied. He did not like Raman for insulting his horse. Raman brought a horse soon. It was a weak animal. The horse, only with bones and skin looked like an animal affected by famine. If anybody climbed on its back, the animal would fall down. Such was the pitiable condition of the horse.

Raman brought the horse by pulling and pushing. The king looked at what Raman was doing with the horse. When the horse reached at the centre of the bridge,



Raman pushed it into the river. It swimmed in the river for some time to safety, but, succumbed to injuries at last. The poor state of health prevented the horse to escape. The king got angry seeing this. 'Raman, what have you done ? You killed the horse by pushing it into the river'.

'Yes lord, I did it for saving your horse. Your horse cannot do such kind of an exercise', Raman replied. The king criticised Raman for the death of the horse. But Raman's justification was strange 'Lord, loss of a useless friend is not a loss. Sometimes it may yield gain'. The king accepted Raman's argument. He also gave Raman a bag full of money.

19. MEAT EATING HORSE

Horse is a vegetarian. But sometimes it has to be turned into a non-vegetarian also when it matters. Here is the story of how Raman turned his horse to a non-vegetarian.

It was an evening on a rainy day. Raman did not expect rain on that day. He set out riding the horse. After some time, it began to rain. He did not return, but continued his journey. Rain continued unabated. Raman travelled further. He was drenched in water.

When he started shivering, Raman entered a near by shop. The horse was kept in front of the shop. Meat cutlet was selling at the shop. He was shivering with cold. Some kind of heat will cease the shivering. But people seemed surrounding the stove. Raman was in a fix.

'My horse is hungry. It wants four meat cutlets', Raman told the shop keeper. But people wondered. 'Will the horse eat meat cutlet?' 'I want to see the horse', one man said and walked outside the shop to see the horse. Everybody followed the man. They all began to look at the strange horse. Raman in the meantime sat near the stove and dried his dresses. The shivering and coldness of the body also disappeared. The rain also receded. Raman bought cutlet and went outside. He showed cutlet to the horse. But the horse did not pay any attention. Raman gave the cutlets to a dog standing nearby. He rode on the horse. The people curiously looked at Raman and not at the horse.

20. HUMAN SACRIFICE

Human sacrifice was common in ancient India. Even today also, there are reports of human sacrifice made by savage people. Human sacrifice was banned at the Vijayanagaram empire during Krishnadevarayar's rule. What can be done, if human sacrifice is the only solution to set things right?

Raman found a way to perform human sacrifice. A bridge, constructed across the river Thungabhadra by the king, washed away even before its construction was over. Superstition among the public was that the destruction of bridge was caused due to the anger of a ghost.

'The ghost did not like the bridge. To appease the ghost, a human sacrifice is a must', the people said. 'If it is not made the bridge will collapse before its completion', a monk opinioned. He was a cruel and a saddist monk. The king was in a dilemma. He wanted the bridge to be built across the river Thungabhadra . The bridge has to be strong and durable.

The king consulted Raman, 'A human sacrifice is necessary for a durable bridge', Raman said. His reply doubled the king's grief. 'I am not willing to erect a bridge by sacrificing innocent people. It is unwise to please the ghost like this,' the king declared.

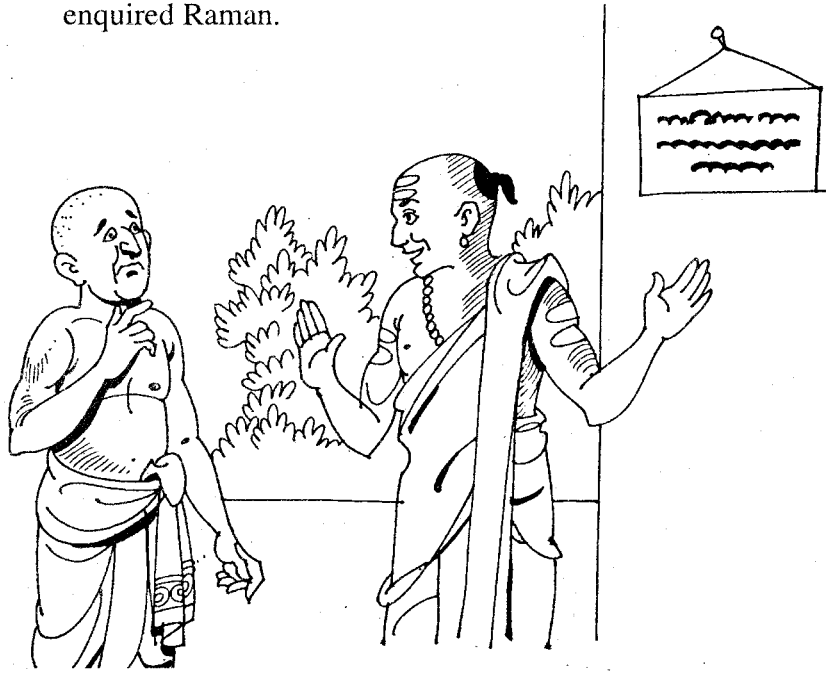
But Raman has other ideas. He advised 'the bridge has to be built. It is necessary for the nation's progress. The ghost can be pleased by performing human sacrifice. There are ways for it'.

'What are the ways?', the king was eager to know about it. 'There are number of criminals in the country who were sentenced to death. Their lives should be sacrificed for public welfare. Now onwards, execute their sentences at the site of the bridges to be built. Your highness should issue necessary orders in this regard. The problem can be solved in this manner', Raman clarified.

The king showed a sign of relief. He was excited. He rewarded Raman by presenting 1000 gold sovereigns. The king was always generous to Raman. That made the court jester a rich man.

21. RAMAN'S DONATION

'We must donate a portion of our wealth to the poor. By God's grace you are provided with houses and properties. Is it possible to donate a portion of your assets to the poor?', the King Krishnadevarayar enquired Raman.



'Your remark is very correct. I will make arrangements for donating a house tomorrow', Raman replied. The king was glad. Raman returned home. He was reluctant to part with anything that came to his possession. He hanged a board in one of his houses notifying this.

'The house is to be donated. Anyone who is satisfied himself with his assets is eligible for this house'.

Many read the board. But nobody came forward to accept the house. At that time a Brahmin came there. 'Swamy, Please do me a favour by donating this house to me', he told Raman. 'Don't you have a house?', Raman asked the Brahmin. 'Yes, I have. But it is small and old'.

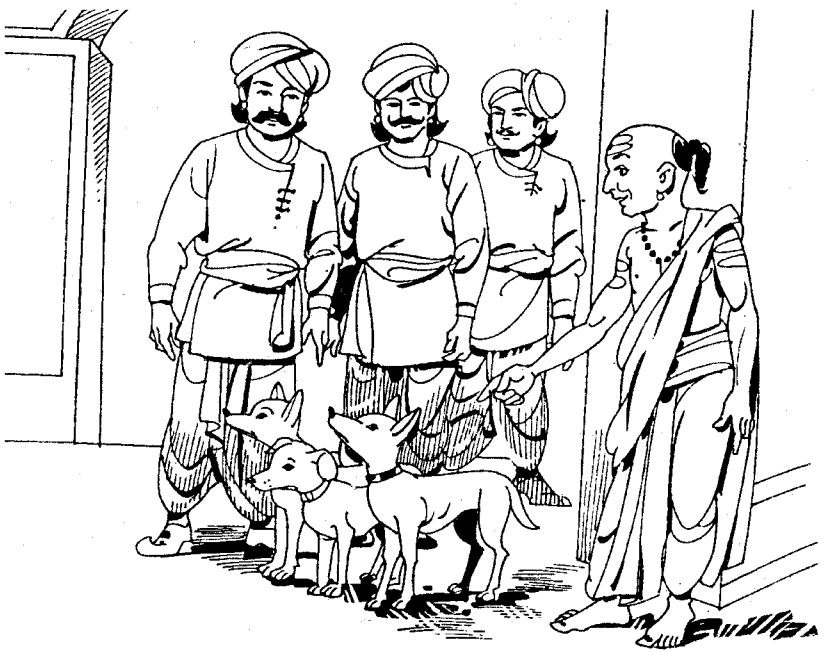
'Have you read the board in front of the house? The house is to be donated to those who are satisfied themselves with their assets. You seem to be dissatisfied with yourself', Raman said.

The Brahmin became silent. He had no answer. He thought for a second, 'If I say I am dissatisfied, Raman won't donate me the house'. The Brahmin replied, 'I am satisfied with what I have'. Raman said 'You are satisfied with yourself, isn't it ? 'Yes', the Brahmin answered. 'Then why did you come in search of my house?', Raman doubted. The Brahmin was ashamed. He returned empty handed. Later nobody came in search of Raman's house.

22. LENGTH OF DOG'S TAIL

It is difficult to change one's behaviour.It is a common saying that 'The bend of dog's tail won't straighten, even if it is put in a tube for thousand years'. But Raman had straightened the dog's tail once. The story is like this.

Once the King Krishnadevarayar exhibited 10 pups in the durbar hall. The bend of its tail has to be straightened. He offered 100 gold sovereigns to those who straightened the tail of the pups. The king was of the



belief that its tail could never be straightened. He allowed three months to those who take the pups to straighten their tails. Many took the pups home. They were confident of achieving success in this regard.

The people who brought the pups began to perform tricks in its tail. One man tied a stone in its tail to get rid

of its bend. The poor pup walked with weight in its tail. Another man put a metal tube around its tail. The third person called a masseur to massage the pup's tail. The fourth person bought costly medicines produced by a doctor and applied to the dog. The fifth person chanted 'mantras' and performed 'poojas' with the help of sorcerer to straighten the tail. The sixth man thought if the pup becomes fat, its tail will straighten. So he gave the pup milk, butter, ghee and other nutritious food.

These people suffered a lot to fulfill the challenge posed by the king. Raman came to know about all these from various people. He did not spend a single paise for this mission. He simply tied his pup and provided only food for its survival. His pup began to weaken day by day.

At last the day came for the return of the pups to the durbar. All of them produced the pups before the king. The tails of the nine pups remained as usual. Their bend couldn't be straightened. Then it was the turn of Raman to produce his pup. Its tail was not bent. The pup was unable to move its tail or stand erect.

The king inspected the ten pups. He saw the tail of Raman's pup standing straight. He gave the promised 100 gold sovereigns to Raman. Everybody hailed Raman's wisdom. The continuous starvation made the pup's tail to remain straight. Similarly constant famine can change a man's behaviour, according to Raman.

23. RAMAN AND THE PRIESTS

Raman's dog died. It was due to starvation that the dog had died. The court priests used this situation to trap Raman. They propagated that Raman's action of putting the pup to starvation was deliberate. The dog's soul is wandering, they alleged.

Fear gripped among the people about the dog's ghost. The priest asked Raman to bury the dog's ghost. They conspired to grab money from Raman in the name of poojas. But Raman came to know about the dubious plans of the priests. 'You do the poojas and bury the dog's ghost. I am going to sell my horse. It is a good horse. I will give you the money by selling the horse', Raman promised the priests.

The priests were happy. They thought the horse will yield at least 100 gold coins. They believed that their plans are going to succeed. 'Poor Raman, he fell in our trap', one priest said. 'Raman received 100 gold coins from the king, by way of putting the dog to starvation death. We are going to get that money', another priest laughed.

The priests did some poojas the other day to convince Raman and the locals. They approached Raman for remuneration for further poojas. Raman in the meantime had advertised the sale of his horse. ' A horse is for sale. It costs only a copper coin. Those who want to buy the horse has to buy a dustbin also. Then only the horse

will be given. The dustbin costs 100 gold coins'. This was the advertisement appeared for the sale of the horse. The sale was effected at the time of priests' arrival for the remuneration of poojas.

Raman gave the money received from the sale of the horse, a single copper coin. He got the dustbin's cost of 100 gold coins. Raman taught a lesson to the greedy and jealous priests. They did not receive the actual price of the horse; whereas the dustbin yielded 100 coins. Thus Raman ridiculed the priests and managed to get full amount for his horse.

24. MOUSTACHE EATING HORSE

The Mughal emperors were planning to attack Vijayanagaram. King Krishnadevarayar knew about the mobilisation of forces on the borders. He also made arrangements for national security. The strength of cavalry was also increased.

The king bought some ponies. He handed over them to his trusted locals to bring up. He had also arranged to provide 15 silver coins per month towards the feeding expenses of the horses. Raman, who knew about this, reached the palace and brought a horse. Raman was in dire need of money at that time. He tied the pony to an adjacent room in his house. He sealed the entrance in that room. The fodder was given to the horse through a hole dug on the wall.

Raman did not use the money for providing food to the horse. Instead he spent the money for food to his people. The price of provisions in the country was high, as lion's share was allocated to national security. So Raman did not spend even a copper coin for food to the horse. He gave handful of dried grass daily to the horse

for its survival. Months have passed. The king ordered to present all the horses at the durbar. Everybody except Raman presented the horse at the palace.

Raman informed the king that it was not so easy to bring his horse to the palace. Then the king directed his Muslim General, in charge of cavalry, to bring the pony. The bearded Muslim General was capable of bringing any troublesome horse. He reached Raman's house. Raman showed the horse's room to the General. He peeped through the hole in the wall. It was the time of giving dried grass to the horse. The hunger- stricken pony thought it was dried grass and began to pull the beard and moustache of the General. He tried his best to free from the clutches of the horse. The General cried for help.

The people who assembled there cut his beard with a knife and saved him from the grip of the horse. The General presented the pony at the durbar. For that he has to demolish the wall of the room. 'Why did you keep the pony to starvation', the king asked Raman. 'I used to give handful of dried grass to the horse daily. By giving such meagre fodder to the horse, it has done severe harm. If it was given sumptuous food, what would have been the impact'. Raman joked. The king believed that it was the horse which demolished the wall.

The king did not like Raman's reply. Yet he continued. 'People in the country are starving. But the horse is to be given sumptuous food!'. Raman's reply made the king sensible. The king ordered to cut short the defence expenditure and allowed it to be utilised for social welfare. He rewarded Raman with 15 gold coins for pointing out the failure in his rule.

25. RAMAN TRESPASSES

An art festival was going on at the king's durbar. A dance troupe from Kuchipudi has arrived there. The king deliberately concealed the news of arts programme from Raman. He feared that Raman may make trouble during the dance programme. He also directed the soldiers and ushers to prevent Raman.

The dance started. The King, Queen, Ministers and Military Chiefs were all enjoying the programme. Raman wished to enter the durbar. 'Swami, the majesty has directed us not to inform you about the dance programme. If it is leaked, we will be beheaded by the king', one of the soldiers told Raman. 'The king has directed not to inform me about the programme, isn't it? Not ordered to deny my entry into the palace'. Saying this Raman began to trespass the durbar. Then two soldiers stopped him and insisted on him not to enter the palace.

Raman called one of the soldiers and told secretely, 'The king will reward me suitably if I reach inside. I will give you half of that reward.' The soldier became happy. Raman told the other soldier similarly. He too became happy. Thus Raman entered the durbar with the help of those two soldiers.

The king became furious by seeing Raman. Yet, he continued to watch the programme. It was not a good

entertainment. The king thought how to end the programme. The play was about Lord Krishna. It was a scene where little Krishna was stealing the dress unrobed by the cowherdess. Seeing this, Raman entered the stage and beat the hero, who began to cry loudly. Soon the programme came to an end as someone unfurled the curtain.

26. SHARING THE REWARD

The Kuchipudi troupe returned from Vijayanagaram. It was Raman who packed up the troupe. The king called Raman and questioned. Raman remained unmoved. 'I beat those who lied'.

'He was playing Krishna stories', isn't it?', the king asked. 'If so, I had committed a sin. You penalise me. I will dictate the punishment. Beat me 24 times after tying to a pillar,' Raman requested.

'Beating 24 times! What are you asking?' the king asked with surprise. The programme of Kuchipudi troupe was not so good. 'It was Raman's blow which ended their programme. For that I am not going to punish you. Instead you are to be rewarded' he added. 'As reward or punishment I want 24 blows only', Raman insisted. 'Why do you demand 24 blows?', the king became curious. 'I will tell you that later. Please promise 24 blows !' Raman's demand was accepted by the king.

The soldiers came to carry out the punishment. Two soldiers stood on both sides of Raman. 'Oh lord, your reward for my entry inside the palace, is also entitled to the two soldiers. I had promised to give half of my reward to them. The soldiers allowed me to enter the durbar only after promising the prize. Thus, 24 blows that you promised should be equally divided to the two ushers', Raman pleaded the king.

The king became furious with the soldiers for defying his orders. He wanted to give severe punishment to the greedy and corrupt soldiers. He ordered to execute 50 blows each to the two soldiers. He rewarded Raman with money for finding the corrupt officials.

27. A STRANGE CAT

Once Vijayanagaram was gripped with rat menace. The increase of rat population definitely brings famine and food shortage. To destroy the rat menace, the authorities decided to bring up cats. The king brought one thousand cats for this purpose. He gave a cat each to a family. Money was also given to provide milk to the cats.

Raman also brought one cat and reached home. According to him, cat can survive even without milk. 'Even human beings grow here without milk. We can give milk to our son using the money provided by the

king', Raman told his wife. 'But cat will steal the milk and drink', his wife doubted. Raman consoled his wife, 'I have found a way to stop it'.

Raman brought the kitten to his home. But he didn't give even a drop of milk to it. He boiled the milk well. A plate of hot milk was placed before of the kitten. The cat didn't touch it. It was afraid of the steam from the hot milk. Raman forcibly dipped the cat's lips in the hot milk. Its lip got burned.

It was a turning point. Henceforth Raman's cat never drank milk. The kitten began to hide when it saw milk. Thus Raman made his cat a milk hating animal. He gave the milk to his son. A fortnight elapsed. The king ordered to present all the kittens at the durbar. Everybody exhibited the cats. They all have become healthy by drinking milk. But Raman's cat alone remained lean.

'Yeh Raman, what happened to your kitten? Are you not giving milk to it?' the king asked. 'Oh lord, when even a drops of milk is not available for human beings to drink, who bothers to feed the cat with milk ?' Raman countered. But the king was furious. So you had misappropriated the fund given by me to feed the kitten.

'I haven't misused the fund. I have bought milk using the fund. Since my cat did not drink milk, I gave it to my son', Raman told. But the king did not give up. 'Is

there any cat in this country which does not drink milk ? You are lying. I will give you 100 gold coins, if it is proved that your cat does not drink milk. On the other hand, if your cat drinks milk, you will be whipped 100 times.....! Are you ready?', the king challenged. Raman agreed.

A soldier brought a plate of milk and placed before the cat. Soon it ran away. It didn't even smell the milk. Thus Raman won the competition. He was presented with 100 gold coins. Later Raman told the king, how he trained it not to drink milk. The king laughed along with Raman. The king praised Raman for his wisdom.

28. EATING SAND

The king used to prepare special type of sugar crystal for himself. After preparation, the sugar will be dried and preserved. Once Raman saw this process at the palace. He asked the king 'What is it?' 'It is sand', the king tried to fool Raman. But he was doubtful. 'It is a special sand', the king clarified.

Raman did not utter anything. The king thought that Raman had believed everything he said. The king went to his room and told the queens about the incident. The queens joined the king in laughter. They all believed that the king had befooled Raman.

Raman went to his home. He returned with his son. They began to eat the sugar kept for drying. When the king returned from haram, he saw Raman and his son eating the sugar. 'What are you doing?', the king asked.

'Oh lord! our dearest cow has died. In order to compensate our sorrows, we are eating sand.' Both of them continued eating sugar. The king was very much moved by Raman's words. He ordered to collect rest of sugar and keep it safely. Henceforth the king never tried to fool Raman.

29. CAPITAL PUNISHMENT AGAIN

Once the King Krishnadevarayar built a new palace. He called a good artist and prepared wall paintings. The king and Raman started looking at the

paintings. There was beautiful scenery in it. The palace was also adorned with princess's portraits.

Raman was attracted by a beautiful woman's portrait. It was the rear view of a woman in a sitting pose. Her shapely figure, long and curly hair attracted everyone. But there was a serious lapse in it. The face of that beautiful woman was not drawn by the artist.

'Where is the front view of this woman?' Raman doubted. 'The picture has face for the woman. We must see it by our imaginative ability. Do you have any sense of beauty?', the king ridiculed Raman . 'I used to draw pictures, when I studied at hermitage. Now I am going to learn drawing for one month', Raman said. 'It is a good thing', king answered. Raman did not come to the palace for one month. After a month he came to the palace. 'I have come here after studying drawing and painting', Raman said.

'It is good. As you know, we have a newly built summer palace. There are no pictures and paintings there. You may draw a picture there', the king ordered. Raman nodded and went to the summer palace. He began to draw and paint pictures. But his paintings were strange. Parts of our body like eyes, legs and teeth were drawn here and there.

After a week, Raman informed the king that he has completed his work. The king went to see the

pictures. But he was disappointed. The beautiful walls of the building looked dirty by painting. It was a heart-breaking scene for the king. He has to live in that palace along with guests the day after. ' What is this?' the king became furious.

'I have painted the pictures of beautiful queen's leg, hands etc. You must have imaginative ability to see them in full', Raman joked. Raman thought the king will laugh on hearing the answer. But the King burst with fury and ordered 'Take him away and behead.'

30. FIGHT BETWEEN EXECUTIONERS

As soon as the king ordered the execution of Raman, two soldiers came forward with sword to carry out the order. They set out to the forest. Raman walked between the two soldiers. The soldiers had a grudge towards Raman. So they had no hesitation in killing him. On the other hand, Raman also planned to cheat the soldiers.

Their journey was through the bank of the river Thungabhadra . On the way Raman said 'I want to pray for a moment immersing in this river'. But one of the soldiers was doubtful. 'If you disappear after immersing in river, what should we tell the king?' he said.

'I won't cause any harm to you from the king. I am prepared to die. After I immersed in river, you two stand

on my sides to prevent me from fleeing. If I try to escape in the midst of praying, you cut with swords aiming my neck. You can thus evade king's punishment', Raman told the soldiers.

Raman stood in water with closed eyes. The soldiers were beside him with raised swords. They all stood there for some time. Suddenly Raman swimmed into underwater. The soldiers cut their swords from both sides simultaneously. The heads of soldiers fell in the river. Their bodies were washed away in water.

Raman who came from underwater saw the dead bodies of the soldiers. He reached the durbar to see the king. The king was frightened. 'You have escaped', he said. 'Oh Lord! Human beings got more value than walls. Your anger has resulted in the loss of two lives'. Raman told the king what has happened in the execution bid. It was Raman's dirty paintings on the palace wall which made the king furious.

31. RAMAN TRAPS KING AND PRIEST

Tenali Raman has escaped thrice from the death sentence. The three escapes were very narrow ones. It was Raman's sheer wisdom and intelligence that saved him. But fear has gripped on Raman now, 'If the king pronounced any other death sentence I may not be able to escape'. This was the fear of Raman.

Raman planned to get an assurance from the king not to order to execute him again. He planned a detailed programme to achieve it. The king had a soft corner towards women. He was interested in sexual affairs with them. The priest Tathachary also had similar habits. Raman utilised their weakness. He knew both were fond of women.

He called upon Tathachary and tempted him to woman. 'I have a beautiful woman in my custody. You can enjoy with her in my house. Come to my home today at 10 p.m.' Tathachary agreed . Later Raman approached the King Krishnadevarayar. 'Oh Lord, There is a beautiful woman in my home. You can enjoy with her there. Please visit my home today at 10.15.p.m.' The king also agreed to reach Raman's house on time.

Tathachary reached Raman's house at 10 p.m. Raman told the priest certain conditions. The priest has to be dressed like a woman and should speak in female voice. The priest has to accept the conditions of Raman. He was so fond of beautiful women. Raman dressed up the priest like a woman. He sat on the silk bed like a disciplined woman.

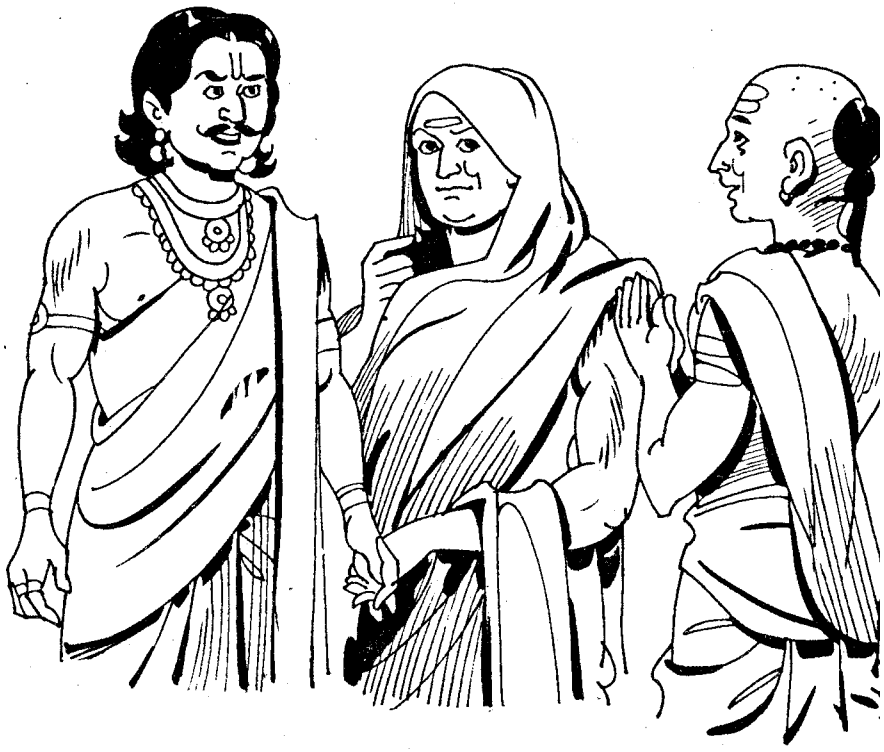
'The woman will reach here soon. She is very shy. You must start speaking in female voice. Only after coming closer, you should disclose that you are a male. Then you can proceed further'. The priest agreed with Raman's idea. After 15 minutes, the king reached there. Raman

helped the king to dress up like a woman. He accompanied the king to the room where Tachachary was sitting. Raman closed the door immediately after the king entered Tathachary's room. He peeped through the door to witness the 'unusual drama.'

32. ASHAMED KING SWEARS

Tathachary wished the 'woman' who entered into his room. The king and the priest believed that the other person was a woman. Both were dressed up like woman. The king revealed that he was a male and came there to enjoy the company of a woman. Tathachary was surprised. He realised that it was the real King Krishnadevarayar. How can he forget the majestic male voice of the king?.

'Oh Lord how did you appear here in this costume?' Tathachary enquired. The king understood how he has been fooled by Raman. Tathachary also came to know about the whole episode. The king ordered to open the door. His mind was filled with fear, sadness and anger . Raman got frightened. 'I have done it to save my life. You had sentenced me to capital punishment thrice. You must swear not to kill me', Raman pleaded. 'If you deny my request, I will publicise the whole episode involving both of you', Raman added.



Raman's reply changed the king's mind. 'The three death sentences pronounced by me earlier were all avoidable. It happened due to my sudden fury. Hence forth, I won't sentence you to capital punishment', the king declared. Raman was relieved. He opened the door and let them free.

33. QUARREL BETWEEN KING AND QUEEN

The King Krishnadevarayar had a quarrel with his queen Thirumalambal. He didn't even utter a word to his wife for weeks. The king stopped visiting the harem. The queen, meantime sought the help of Tenali Raman to settle the dispute. Raman agreed and enquired the reason for the quarrel.

The queen narrated the incident like this. The king wrote a poem. It was a vague one. Certain words like sun, moon, stars, beautiful sky..... were written here and there. There was no sense in the poem. The king invited his ministers to hear his recitation. But they all avoided the king on flimsy grounds. After midnight, as there were no listeners to his poem, the king went to the harem.

The queen was sitting on the bed expecting the king. She had sleepless nights. As soon as the king reached harem, he began to recite the poem. Thirumalambal remained sleepy hearing the poem. She began to yawn often. The king thought that it was due to disrespect that the queen had yawned. The king who left the harem then, had not returned there yet.

The queen wept after narrating the story. Raman assured her that he will find a solution to the problem. He consoled the queen. Raman waited for the moment to settle their dispute. Soon the day came.

34. RAMAN SETTLES THE QUARREL

Once, the King's durbar was discussing a serious issue. It was about the paddy cultivation in Telangana district. The king said the improvement of agriculture is necessary to meet food shortage. The experts discussed how to utilise the water from Thungabadra river for agriculture. Everybody put forward their suggestions.

Then came the turn of Tenali Raman. He came before the king with a plate of paddy seeds. Raman said'. 'I reached here with a new type of paddy seeds. If it is sowed, the yield will be three times more than the present result'. But the king was reluctant to admit the claim. 'That cultivation need particular type of soil, fertilizers and pesticides. Our farmers will suffer due to their ignorance'. Raman did not bother the king's comment. 'The problem is about the person who sow the paddy seeds'. The king did not understand Raman's utterances. 'What is wrong with the person who sow the seeds?' Raman's intelligence began to work instantly. He said; 'We have to take care of the person who sow the seeds. It doesn't matter, if the person is male or female. But he/she should not have the habit of yawning'.

'But is there anybody in the world who does not yawn'? The king said in the midst of yawning. The king realised the natural fact that all human beings yawn in daily life. He remembered the past events, in which he

scolded the queen for her yawning. The king knew that it was the queen Thirumalambal who had sent Raman as a mediator towards him. The king announced that he is soon going to meet the queen.

Raman felt victorious in his mission. The king reached harem in the same night and apologized to the queen. The king and queen presented Raman valuable gifts for his service.

35. DIVINE PARROT

The king possessed a parrot. It always chanted mantras. People believed that the parrot had divine powers. The king told the uniqueness of the parrot to Raman. 'We too achieve God's grace by chanting mantras like this bird', the king said.

The king gave a fruit to the parrot, which was locked in a cage. As soon as it received the fruit, the parrot began to chant prayers. After that the parrot ate the fruit. Raman opined that the parrot had no such divine powers. It chanted prayers in order to receive the fruit. The king challenged Raman to prove his argument. Raman accepted the challenge. It won't chant any prayers from tomorrow onwards', he assured. The king offered 100 gold coins to Raman if he succeed in his mission. Next day, Raman brought a cat and tied near the parrot's

cage. Seeing the cat, the parrot started to cry loudly. It thought that the cat would kill him. The bird didn't chant prayers afterwards. It was concerned only with its life and safety. Thus Raman proved that parrot had no divine powers. Raman received 100 gold coins from the king as gift.

36. DEFEATED SOLDIER

Once the king, a soldier and Raman had gone to a remote area of Vijayanagaram, where low caste people were living. The villagers followed an uncivilized life style. They used to eat dead animals and birds meat. But they did not kill and eat animals and birds. The civilized people hated them due to such kind of life style.

The soldier boasted himself, 'I don't eat dead animal's meat, even if I had to suffer a lot'. Raman didn't like it. 'If I had to live under such circumstances, I too eat what they provide', Raman said. But the soldier remained in his earlier stand of not eating dead animal's meat. Raman challenged the soldier as he didn't like the boldness of the soldier. The king accepted the challenge put forwarded by Raman.

The king made arrangements for the soldier to reside in the village, where the untouchables were living. He was not permitted to leave the village. The villagers ate

only ragi, other than the dead animal's meat. But the soldier disliked ragi. He had to live without any food for a week. He became lean. The soldier doubted whether he would die of starvation. Finally he had to eat the dead animal's meat and ragi. Raman had won the bet. The soldier conceded the defeat.

37. MONEYLENDER PUNISHED

A moneylender named Ratnachandran lived in Vijayanagaram. He charged heavy interest from the people for the loans. While he charged 50 percent interest, other moneylenders charged only 10-15 percent.

Raman came to know about the exorbitant interest charged by Ratnachandran. He decided to teach a lesson to the moneylender. Raman borrowed five copper plates from Ratnachandran. It was borrowed as loan through his friend Yogayya. When he returned the plates there were five small utensils in addition to that. Ratanachandran was surprised. 'Why is this small utensils?', he asked.

'These were the utensils delivered by the big plates', Yogayya said. As a cunning greedy moneylender Ratnachandran was eager to possess the small utensils also. 'Okay. I forgot to remind you that the utensils were

pregnant at the time of lending'. He took away all the utensils to his room.

After a week, Raman called Yogayya again, 'You go and borrow two gold plates as loan.' Ratnachandran handed over gold plates without any hesitation. He reminded Yogayya that the gold plates were pregnant. 'You must return the baby plates, when you come back.' Ratnachandran's shrewdness began to work.

Yogayya reached Raman's house with the gold plates. Raman melted the plates and converted them into small ones. He presented the small melted plates to those people who suffered at the hands of Ratnachandran earlier. After two days, Ratnachandran called on Yogayya and demanded the gold plates. He was expecting the gold plates and little utensils.

Yogayya replied that the mother and baby utensils died at the time of delivery. He had been well taught by Raman to fool Ratnachandran. The dejected moneylender approached the king and complained. Raman who intervened in the matter told the king the whole episode. The king ordered to arrest Ratnachandran for charging excessive interest on loans.

38. RAMAN DISLIKES FLATTERY

Tenali Raman and the court priest Tathachary had different habits and manners. While Tathachary praised the king for his selfish motives, Raman was just the opposite. He was bold enough to criticise the king. He did not flatter anybody for personal gains.

Once the king arranged sumptuous meal at the palace. Tathachary and Raman had also participated in it. Tathachary said, 'Is there anything in the world which

gives more happiness than king's hospitality of providing food?'. Raman disliked the priests flattery. 'Purging is more happier than sumptuous food', Raman countered. The King Krishnadevarayar also did not like Raman's reply. He intervened.

Raman agreed to prove that his stand was right. The king nodded consent. Raman put the king in a closed room, at the time of nature's call. The king had to reach the toilet soon. But he was trapped inside a closed room, by Raman. The king was uncomfortable. He cried with stomach pain. At last Raman came and opened the door. The king defecated well. He was relieved. When he came out of the toilet, king thanked Raman for letting him free, The king sighed relief. ' Defecation is more joyful than eating, isn't it lord?' Raman asked. The king had no different answer. Thus Raman once more proved wise and intelligent.

39. WRESTLER FLEES

Once a wrestler from Delhi came to Vijayanagaram. He participated in various fighting competitions. Everyone lost to the wrestler from Delhi. The king felt ashamed about this. He wanted to see the wrestler defeated.

At last the king sought the help of Tenali Raman. He agreed to make the wrestler flee from Vijayanagaram.

Raman did not have any knowledge of wrestling. But he was quite sure of driving out the wrestler. Raman called on him and asked 'Do you know the tricks in numerology?' The wrestler got surprised. He remained silent. Raman consoled him and told about the new game in wrestling.

The wrestler didn't understand what Raman was talking. He felt something fussy. He didn't hear about numerology game ever before. The wrestler planned to escape from Vijayanagaram without entering into the arena. For that purpose he dressed like a wood cutter and escaped in midnight from Vijayanagaram.

Tenali Raman triumphed at last. The king presented Raman 1000 gold coins for retaining the glory of kingdom.

40. A SCHOLAR DEFEATED

The King Krishnadevarayar was famous for his hospitality. He welcomed scholars from every walk of life. Once a scholar from Orissa reached Vijayanagaram.

He challenged the inmates of the durbar for a debate. Everybody was afraid of confronting the scholar. They knew about his abilities and past record. The king called the scholars of his durbar to come forward and challenge the guest. They all avoided the situation to face

the scholar. At last the king sought the help of Raman. He wanted to safeguard the prestige of his kingdom at any cost.

Raman agreed to face the scholar. He placed a book, wrapped in red silk cloth, before the scholar. The scholar was anxious. He asked Raman 'What is it?' 'It is the book called.'THILAKASHTA MAHISHA BANDHANAM' , Raman replied. The scholar was surprised. 'I haven't heard of such a book', he said to himself .

Raman challenged the scholar to have a debate next day based on that book. The scholar has to admit the challenge. He could not sleep on that night thinking of the rare book. The scholar planned to flee from Vijayanagaram. For that purpose, he lied to the king that he was ill. He returned to Orisa and searched for the book but could not find it. There was no such book named 'THILAKASHTA MAHISHA BANDHANAM'

Next day, the king called Raman and enquired about the trick he played to drive out the scholar. Raman opened the silk cover and showed it to the king. There was no book inside the cover, but only sesamum, firewood and a rope. He said, ' THILAM means sesamum, KASHTA means firewood and MAHISHA BANDHANAM means rope used to tie buffalo'. The king joined Raman in the wild laughter. He gave Raman a diamond ring as reward.

41. LOVE OF DEVADASI

The King Krishnadevarayar had an affair with a 'Devadasi' (temple dancer) named Krishnaveni. He was sure that she was not involved with any other men. The king wanted to marry her. But he was afraid of the public hatred as most people disliked Devadasi girls.

As usual, the king sought the help of Raman. Raman earlier disagreed with the king's intention. 'It is to amass huge wealth, that the Devadasi pretends love. She will elude you if she finds a man wealthier than you', Raman advised the king. But the king was not prepared to give up his plan. 'She is not like that, she has dedicated me in her heart. If you prove that, she would elude me and love any other man, I will present you 1000 gold coins', the king promised Raman.

Raman was excited. He thought of gaining 1000 gold coins. Raman availed of three months leave from the routine palace work. He reached near Krishnaveni's house and began to meditate under a banyan tree. For that purpose, he dressed like a sage. Krishnaveni saw the 'sanyasi' and reached near him. He gave the Devadasi 10 gold coins and then requested, 'Can you buy me fruits with this money?' She was surprised. A sage in possession of gold coins. He may know the magic of making money, Krishnaveni thought. Otherwise he would not spend such an amount to buy fruits. The sage gave the same amount several times to the Devadasi, for purchasing fruits.

Several days passed. The Devadasi became closer to the sage. Their affinity towards each other increased day by day. One day Krishnaveni requested, 'I understand that you know the magic of making money. Kindly teach me the trick'. The sage became happy that he was going to succeed in his mission. He replied, 'Like your interest of making money, I too have an interest in you' Krishnaveni tried to object it, 'it is not proper for a sage to get attracted to women'.

'Why are you interested in making money? You are soon going to become the queen of Krishnadevarayar. The king has huge wealth in his custody', the sage said. But Krishnaveni was eager to learn the magic of money making. She thought, 'If I learn the magic, by pretending love to the sage, I can earn lot of money and marry a man according to my choice'. This was the attitude of Krishnaveni. Raman in disguise as sage put forward certain conditions before the Devadasi. 'I will stay in the house near the temple. You should send me a love letter. It should contain the request inviting me to your house. I will do the rest as soon as I receive the letter', Raman suggested. Krishnaveni agreed to do so.

As soon as Raman received the letter, he showed it to the king. He understood that the Devadasi had no sincere love for him. He gave 100 gold coins to Raman as promised. Raman got additional gifts from the queens, as they were happy with his performance. It was Raman's work that saved the king from the Devadasi's trap.

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42. A SPY SENTENCED

During 1520 A.D, Vijayanagaram empire had planned to attack neighboring Bijapur Kingdom. The Bijapur Sulthan sent a spy to Vijayanagaram to know about their arms preparation. The spy was a bigot named Rajasaheb. He planned to kill Krishnadevarayar.

Rajasaheb was accustomed to Brahmins' rituals. He knew Sanskrit very well. He was dark in colour and looked like a Tamil Brahmin. He was disguised as ' Raja Iyer' and introduced to King Krishnadevarayar. The king had no hesitation in welcoming the guest, as he behaved like a true Brahmin. Nobody in the palace doubted him about his real identity. He attained full freedom in and around the palace. As a spy, Rajasaheb watched all the movements.

But Tenali Raman was suspicious of guest. He told this to the king. He scolded Raman. The spy in disguise as a Brahmin, became a friend of the king. Raman continued his observation on the spy. One day Raman told the king that Raja Iyer was not a Brahmin but a spy of Bijapur Sulthan. 'I can prove you that Raja Iyer is not a Brahmin. I will show that he is a Muslim', Raman challenged and the king accepted.

Raman collected some leeches from the pond and put them in cold water. One day, he poured that water on the spy while he was sleeping. He woke up suddenly screaming Allah..... Allah..... . The king who saw this understood that the spy was not a Hindu. When the spy got frightened, he called Allah. The king ordered to arrest the spy. The room in which he stayed was thoroughly inspected. Several documents were received from the

room, which proved that the guest was a spy of Bijapur Sulthan. The king sentenced the spy to capital punishment. He congratulated Raman for saving the country. Raman was presented with one lakh gold coins for his service.

43. ANOTHER SPY KILLED

The rivalry between Vijayanagaram empire and Bijapur Kingdom had many other stories to tell. Once the Bijapur Sulthan sent another spy to Vijayanagaram as an astrologer. He also became a great friend of King Krishnadevarayar.

The 'astrologer spy' revealed that the king will die if he crossed Thungabhadra river. It was a preplanned idea of Bijapur Sulthan to prevent Krishnadevarayar from entering into his country. If Krishnadevarayar wants to attack Bijapur, he has to cross Thungabhadra river. The king was in a fix. He was on the move to attack Bijapur. The queens and ministers prevented the king when they heard of the astrologer's advice.

As usual the king sought the help of Raman to solve the problem. Raman believed that the astrologer is a spy of Bijapur Sulthan. The king asked him to prove the charge. Raman agreed, but on one condition. 'Permit me to carry out the punishment also if it is proved that the astrologer is a spy', Raman said. The king agreed and called the astrologer to the durbar. Raman asked him, 'You are a great astrologer. Tell me when will you die?'

'After 34 years', the astrologer replied quickly. 'You are 43 years old now. That means you will die when you attain 77 years', saying this Raman cut the astrologers head, with a sword kept in his waist. The astrologer died on the spot. Raman proved that the astrologer's prediction was wrong. After a thorough search on his body, several clues were recovered to prove the espionage.

The king later crossed Thungabhadra river, fought against the Bijapur Sulthan and won the battle. The king rewarded Raman as usual.

44. THE PRIEST PENALISED

The King Krishnadevarayar was caught in a dilemma after the death of his mother. One of the wishes of his mother was not fulfilled before her death. The priest informed the king that the soul of his mother was wandering around due to this. The king sought the advice of the priests for a solution. The priests had other plans in their mind. They told the king, 'The last wish of your mother was to eat mangoes. She could not fulfill it. As a solution you must donate 12 gold mangoes to 12 Brahmin priests. Then only the soul of your mother will rest in peace'.

The king did as advised by the priests. Raman realised that the priests had cheated the king. This solution is fraud. But he didn't utter anything. After some days, Raman's mother Lakshmma died of arthritis. As part of obsequies Raman gave a feast to the same 12 priests. Before they returned home, Raman burned them with hot ladle on their thighs. The priests could not understand what was happening. They wriggled in pain and complained to the king.

Raman revealed the reason for his action. 'My mother died of arthritis. Her last wish was to burn her paralysed legs with hot ladle. But her wish could not be fulfilled. Her soul is wandering around here. I did this as part of her obsequies'. The people who heard Raman's justification was happy. They all hated the priests.

The king realised the whole episode. The Brahmin priests had betrayed him by taking golden mangoes. Raman gave them suitable penalty. The priests became the enemy of Raman.

45. CONSPIRACY FAILS

The head priest Tathachary also joined the other priests in conspiring against Raman. They all planned to take revenge on Raman for burning them. Tathacahry called Tenali Raman and said, 'I have become old. I have to find a successor. A suitable person has to be trained as a head priest. I think you are the right person. You must accept me as your guru. I will make you an exponent in tantrik poojas'.

Raman did not hesitate. But he felt something wrong in Tathachary's move. He was unaware of the priests' motive. Among the priests, Somayajalu was very poor and simple. Raman gave him 10 gold coins to become acquainted with him. They soon became friends. Raman

understood the conspiracy of the priests through Somayajalu.

The priests planned to burn Raman during the ceremony. At the start of the ceremony, Raman will present 100 gold coins to the guru. Subsequently, a symbol will be affixed on Raman's body with a hot ladle. Then one of the priests will ask Raman a questionnaire like this:

'Raman is not a Brahmin priest to do the poojas. He is only a 'Niyogi' Brahmin. Such persons are not entitled to become priests'. The other priests will join in this discussion and agree on this stand. Meantime, they will burn Raman using hot ladle and send him away. This plan of the priests were well narrated by Somayajalu to Raman.

Finally, the day arrived for Raman to become a disciple. The chief priest started the rituats early in the morning. The other priests in the meantime arranged hot ladle to burn Raman. He asked Tathachary, 'Can a Niyogi Brahmin become the royal priest? Whether the vedic science permit it?' All the priests wondered by hearing the question. They didn't expect such a question from Raman . The priests were in a dilemma to answer the question.

If they let out Raman on the ground that a Niyogi Brahman is not eligible to become royal priest, their conspiracy of burning him cannot take place. If they permit

him, their conservative mind will collapse. Raman retreated from the scene. When the king asked the reason, he narrated the whole episode about the conspiracy of the priests to burn him.

46. BRIDE THROWS SANDALS AT BRIDEGROOM

Once the king was engaged in a private chat with Tenali Raman. In the midst of talk, the king challenged Raman for an unusual affair. It was like this. Raman said, 'A woman will throw sandals on your face. This will happen within one year'. The king accepted this challenge, 'Okay, if that is done, I will give you 100 gold coins'.

After a month, the day of the king's marriage arrived. The bride was Saradambal, daughter of a landlord from Malanadu. That family was unaware of the customs and rituals of a royal family. Tenali Raman utilised this situation. He reached the landlord's house early in the morning. He told the members of the family about the rituals and gave the bride a pair of shoes. They were surprised. Raman told its speciality.

'In Vijayanagaram kingdom, there existed a strange ritual of bride throwing sandals at the bridegroom's face at the time of tying nuptial knot. The bridegroom will

later garland these sandals around brides neck', Raman purposely told the lie. The landlords finally did not get time to find the truth.

Then came the auspicious time of tying the nuptial knot. The members of the family handed over the sandals to Saradambal. She threw it on the face of Krishnadevarayar. All were stunned .But Raman controlled the situation. 'It is a unique ritual of the Malanadu empire', he told the king. The king then remembered his earlier challenge with Raman. He became calm and garlanded the bridegroom, as told by Raman. The king presented Raman with gold coins as promised.

47. RAMAN'S FANCY DRESS

Even after the marriage, the king was not happy. He was angry with Raman due to the 'sandal throwing incident'. Raman had also earned 100 gold coins from the king during the ceremony. The king ordered to debar Raman from entering the palace. Raman obeyed and returned, after bowing to the king. ' I don't want to see your face anymore', the king declared. On the next day, when the durbar meeting was in progress, a strange man came there. His face and head were covered with a pot. Everybody laughed at the unusual sight. It was Tenali Raman. The pot was really suited to

his head. There were two holes for the eyes. He peeped through the holes and showed gestures at the public.

When the people greeted, the pot on his head hanged to both sides as he accepted the greetings. All those assembled in the durbar joined in mass laughter.

During this time, the king entered the durbar. He didn't like the uproar. 'Who is walking here in fancy dress? Tie him', the king ordered the soldiers. Soon came the reply, 'Oh king ! It is Tenali Raman. You had ordered not to show my face. Hence, I covered it with a pot', Raman reminded the king's earlier order.

The king this time joined in the laughter. He asked Raman to remove the pot from his face. Raman obliged.

48. RAMAN FOOLED ROBBERS

As a jester, Tenali Raman's duty begins early morning daily. He reached the palace before the king woke up. He returned home only after the king went to sleep. So Raman got little time to look after his family affairs.

One day, he was returning home late in the night. On the way, he remembered to irrigate his agricultural land. It has to be done even at midnight, he thought. Then he saw two robbers hiding in his land. The robbers did not see Raman. They planned to rob the house after Raman went to bed.

Raman thought of an idea. He called his wife Mankamma and said loudly. 'The country is fed up with robbers' menace. It is not safe to keep valuables like gold ornaments in the house. It has to be sealed in a box and put it into the well. We can take it back, after drying out

the well when need arises'. The robbers who heard this dreamt of great catch of valuables from the well.

Meanwhile, Raman and wife sealed a box, containing a heavy stone and put it into the well. They went to bed for sleep. The robbers began to take the water out

of the well. The water from the well was diverted to the cultivable land. Due to darkness they were afraid of getting into the well. They continued their task of pouring out the water from the well till next day morning. Finally they got box containing stone. Raman woke up

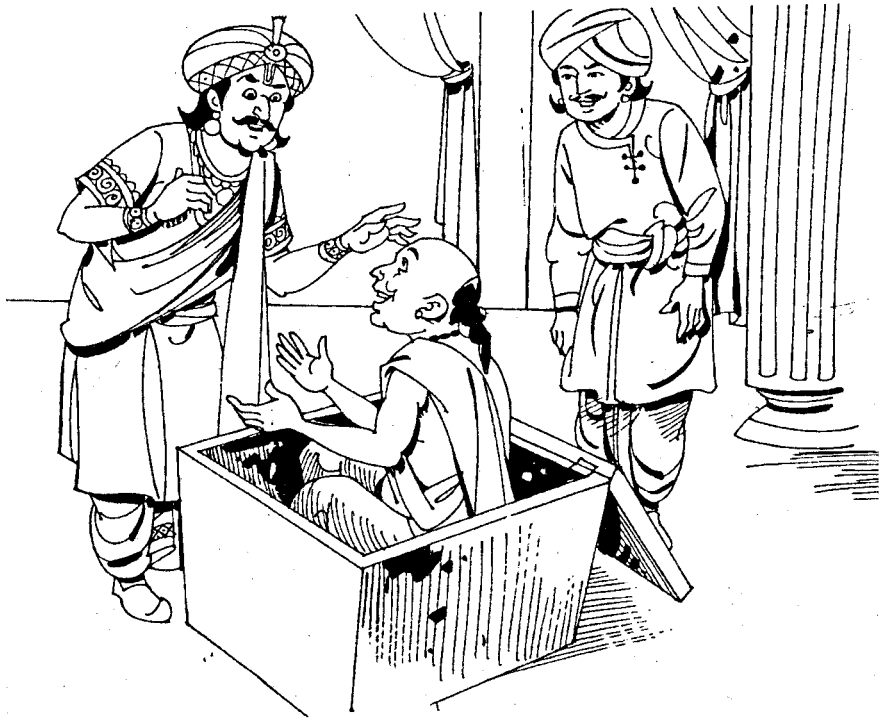
and reached near the well. The robbers began to flee. Raman thanked them for irrigating his land. He got the work done without spending a single paise. The ashamed robbers fled from the spot and escaped.

49. AN EXPERIMENTAL DEATH

Tenali Raman had possessed a lot of wealth. Even the king used to approach Raman when he was in dire need of money. Raman got such huge amount by way of presentation and gifts. As a court jester, he received many gold coins as reward for his services.

There was a system of confiscation of wealth by the king when wealthy persons died. So Raman did not trust the king. He wanted to experiment the consequent happenings after his death. Whether the king will look after his family members? Will the king pay compensation to his relatives? So Raman pretended as ill and later as dead. The rumour of his 'death' spread all over Vijayanagaram. The news reached the palace after some days.

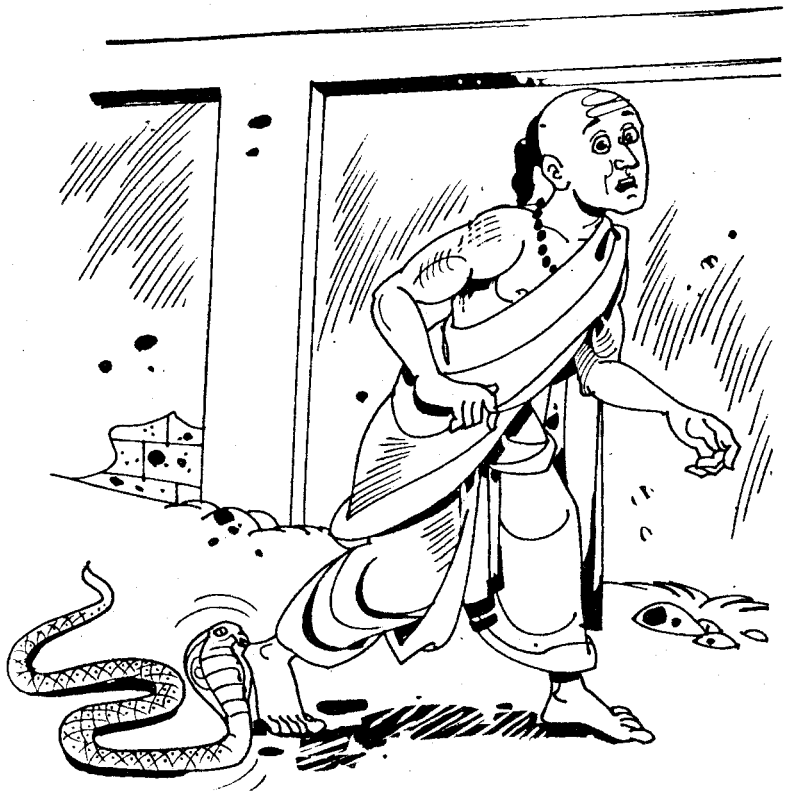
Meanwhile Raman put all his money in a box. The lengthy box had holes to breath air. Raman himself laid in that box along with the cash. The officials, who reached Raman's house, confiscated the cash box and carried it to the palace. They didn't realise Raman's presence inside the box.



When the king unsealed and opened the box, he got frightened. The 'dead' Raman came out of the box alive. Raman said ' Oh Lord! I did it because I wanted to know what you will do after my death. When I die, please do not neglect my family. The old rule of confiscation of wealth has to be changed.' The king became conscious about what Raman said.

50. RAMAN DIES

The death of Tenali Raman was quite accidental. A snake bite led him to death. When he realised that death was fast approaching, Raman sent a man to call



the king. But the king did not take it seriously. He thought, Raman as a jester had sent a man to fool him. The king did not go to see his jester. Raman breathed his last in the absence of the king.

Krishnadevarayar wept after hearing the death of his dearest friend. The king cried aloud, 'Oh! Raman, you had made me laugh several times. I thought this time also you planned to delight me. Otherwise I would have reached at your bedside. You had amused me up to your death. Now you have left me by providing sorrow.'

The death of Tenali Raman caused deep sorrow not only to the king but also to the entire Vijayanagaram empire. Even though Raman died long ago, he is still alive in the hearts of millions of people for his wise and homorous activities.